

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ACTS AND RESOLVES

OF THE

SIXTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1897

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GOVERNOR POWERS' ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:

Called and chosen by the voters of the State of Maine to legislate in and for their interests and welfare, during the years 1897 and 1898, we have, one and all of us I sincerely believe, accepted this trust and duty, with a proper appreciation of its importance and many responsibilities; and also with a special determination that whatever has been committed to us to do shall be performed with strict fidelity and unselfish devotion.

At the commencement of this new year we have very much for which to be truly thankful. Our people have been and are to-day signally blest with peace, plenty, and general health and happiness. During the past year the products of our farms have been the most fruitful ever known. The skies are already brightening in our State and Nation with the promise of greater coming industrial prosperity. The clouds of depression and distrust, that have to a great extent injured and paralyzed our industries, are, we hope, fast melting away, and we even now perceive evidences of the dawning of the day when we shall reap and enjoy the beneficial effects, resulting from the recent verdict of the American people in favor of sound currency, protection and good government. Certainly we have escaped all immediate danger of partial repudiation of our public and private indebtedness and practical confiscation of the assets of the industrious and saving. I have an abiding faith that with confidence restored, prosperity and enterprise will ere long once more return to rule and bless our land.

Maine during the past four years has had a steady, though not rapid growth, and has been moving onward in the right direction, building railroads, and developing some of our vast resources, and I believe that I may confidently predict that the immediate future has in store for us much better and greater progress than we have ever before realized or enjoyed.

Our young men have, very generally, ceased to emigrate to the far West as soon as they are old enough to commence life

for themselves. They are beginning to learn and realize the important truth, that at home are to be found more certain inducements and advantages, with much less of hardship, suffering and privation.

Our people have learned, in the stern school of experience, to their sorrow and cost, that a large part of the many millions of money that have been sent westward to enrich and build up that section, and to be invested in all sorts of wild and visionary schemes, will never be returned to them again; and they will no longer permit themselves to be deluded and deceived by specious pretences and false promises rarely ever to be realized. We may therefore reasonably hope that their savings, hereafter, will be largely employed in more fully developing the resources of our own State.

It is sad to contemplate what vast strides we might have made in material prosperity, wealth, and population, if the large sums that have been sent abroad and lost, had been kept at home and carefully invested in legitimate enterprises here. For there were, and are, ample opportunities to use this money in Maine. Factories and mills might now be using our magnificent water powers which are running to waste.

To check this tendency, and to induce our savings banks to invest more largely in Maine, the Legislature of 1893 enacted a law,—which action I cheerfully and gladly supported,—providing for a lighter tax on home investments thereafter made. At the time of its passage I believed the discrimination to be good policy—but too small. I am more firmly convinced of it now than I was then.

The promise of large interests or profits is easily and often made by those who can only repay either principal or interest in case some deal or utopian scheme shall succeed, and yet these flattering assurances have too often found confiding individuals and institutions who have been induced to place faith in them.

We can with confidence call the attention of capital everywhere to the bright prospects and many undeveloped resources of our State, and to the certainty that all investors and investments will not suffer from unfriendly legislation, and will be fairly and equitably treated and protected by equal, just, and wise laws.

We point with just pride and gratification to our State, to its position, past and present, in the councils of the Nation. We have a good soil, a healthy and invigorating climate, an unrivaled

seacoast, excellent harbors, splendid scenery, beautiful lakes and rivers, extensive and magnificent forests, and a general diffusion of education and knowledge free to all. In none is the standard of excellence and intelligence higher.

Every person within our borders enjoys fully the blessings of personal liberty and individual security.

Our many miles of seacoast, with its cool bracing air in mid-summer, dotted o'er with comfortable and often elegant summer cottages and hotels, indented with numerous harbors, bays, and inlets, present to the summer tourist or resident unrivaled advantages and attractions.

Our vast forests abound with moose, deer, caribou, and other game. Our streams, lakes, rivers, and bays, well stocked with many varieties of fish, offer to sportsmen unequalled attractions, and bring, with each recurring year, large and steadily increasing numbers of people, whose sojourn here is pleasant, healthful, and beneficial to themselves and profitable to many of our own citizens.

Certainly it would seem that we have ample inducements to retain our own people, and to draw those to us from other lands who are desirable and worthy to enjoy these advantages with us.

The burdens of taxation in most of our towns are comparatively light, but must necessarily be somewhat commensurate with the privileges enjoyed. We cannot reasonably expect to have good schools, good roads, good municipal government, and all the comforts and blessings of a highly civilized community, without paying for them, and I believe that the tax payers, generally, are willing to do so. They do, however, rightly insist that the assessment, as far as possible, be made to bear equally and equitably upon all property and residents. People do not complain of taxation which is burdensome, if they are convinced of its necessity and equality. We had ample evidence of this during, and for a time after, the close of the late Civil War.

It is sometimes said that if certain species of property is taxed the possessors or owners will leave the State. It is not worth while to bribe such men to stay here by omitting to tax them or their assets. The man who will not willingly bear his fair share, but desires to load it upon his neighbors, we can well spare.

All farms, timber lands, mills, factories, railroads, and the like are certain to be included in the tax gatherer's list, and should not be compelled to pay unreasonably high taxes by reason of other assessable property escaping taxation.

In this connection I would urgently impress upon this Legislature the advisability of going slow and using great care in exempting property from taxation. The tendency in this direction should be checked. It was one of the greatest evils of the middle ages.

To exempt or to fail to tax is simply to add so much more to the amount placed upon property which is included in the lists; and often this additional burden is placed upon property that can ill afford to bear it.

The biennial State Valuation of the State Board of Assessors will contain very important information for your consideration. It will show a steady though not very large increase in wealth, and, judging by the increase in the number of polls, there must have been an additional increase in population of 15,000 in the last two years.

The wisdom of the Legislature in creating this Board has been fully justified by experience and the faithful work it has done.

Under the old system once in ten years only were values equalized and changed. Under the new this takes place every two years and keeps the amount of tax assessed more equitable and proportionate to the value of property in the various cities and towns.

Now our valuations, upon which State and county taxes are assessed, readily respond to and are based upon any changes in value very soon after they occur.

I am glad to know that the Board of Assessors have not so much endeavored to be able to show a large increase in wealth as to more thoroughly equalize the values placed upon property, and it is gratifying to learn that, acting under this rule, notwithstanding a large deduction of \$3,814,535.00 from vessel property, which they were compelled to make under the shipping act of 1895, they are still able to report an increase in these times of depression of \$4,022,628.00.

In the end there can be no doubt that it is the part of wisdom not to create imaginary values on paper, but to act under the rule, which has guided the assessors in making their valuation, that no property should be valued beyond what it is reasonably worth.

We should not, for the sake of showing prosperity or increased wealth, raise values beyond what the facts will warrant.

This Board of State Assessors, ever since its creation, has, as all well know who have had personal intercourse with and business before them, endeavored to do their duty with great fidelity and fairness to all the various property interests of the State.

They found grave inequalities which they have, as far as they reasonably could, corrected, so as to promote equal and just taxation.

The task before them, to obtain an equitable and just valuation, which should do injustice to no interests and no class of property, has been one difficult to perform; but they have been equal to it, and the people are very generally well satisfied with their conclusions.

I think the State owes to them very much for the impartial, patient, and intelligent investigation which they have given to the many important questions that have come before them, and the eminently fair and just conclusions at which they have arrived.

This Board is of so much importance—it being very desirable that all should have confidence in it—that I know you will see to it that none but men of ability, sound judgment, strict integrity, and business experience shall be selected to act as members of it.

The people should have as implicit reliance in this Board of State Assessors, and should feel as much confidence in the correctness and justice of their conclusions, as they do in the Judiciary of our State, and its standard of integrity should be as high.

FINANCES.

The financial condition of our State, its available resources under existing laws, and its probable annual expenditures, is a subject in which one and all of our people have a deep interest and one to which I would urgently invite your careful attention and consideration.

The credit of our State is now, and always has been, upon a very high plane. Its three per cent. bonds always command a premium. The large indebtedness, which was a legacy to us from the war of 1861, has been gradually reduced and paid off until at the present time our bonded debt is, in round numbers,

\$2,303,000.00. For several years past it has been extinguished at the rate of \$50,000.00 per annum. Good policy, and a proper regard for future contingencies, demand that we continue during this and next year to pay at least as large an amount.

I shall not at this time, attempt to present to you any extended detailed or itemized exhibit of past or probable future receipts or expenditures.

The reports of the State treasurer, which will be furnished you, and which I trust each of you will carefully examine, will acquaint you with all the necessary data of the past two years, and enable you to form correct conclusions as to the future. They are my sole authority.

But there are certain deductions and conclusions with which I am impressed by an examination of those reports, to which I would invite your best thought and judgment.

The balance in the State treasury at the beginning of the year 1895 was \$458,195.85. The balance there at the present time is, in round numbers, about \$200,000.00. It is very desirable that there should be at all times at least \$100,000.00 to properly carry on its business. The expenditures have exceeded the receipts during the past two years by the large sum of more than \$250,000.00. This has resulted solely from the largely increased appropriations which the last Legislature deemed advisable to make, and from reduced rates of taxation.

The same ratio of receipts and expenditures for the years 1897 and 1898 would create a deficit of more than \$100,000.00. But there is one other important fact to be considered. The receipts for the year 1897 from direct taxation will probably be some \$80,000.00 less than they were in 1895 or 1896, as the tax levied and assessed for 1896 is two and one-fourth mills instead of two and one-half mills which was the rate in 1894 and 1895. The tax assessed for any year is not, to any considerable amount, collected or paid into the treasury until the following year. Hence the decrease in the amount to be received in the year 1897.

It is my deliberate judgment that, in a time of profound peace, we cannot afford to be continually, year after year, running in debt or having our expenditures exceed our receipts and thus creating a constantly increasing deficit, to be tided over by temporary loans or funded into more permanent ones.

We have arrived at a point where it is imperative that our expenditures must be brought within our income.

It is possible that this Legislature may be able to find some sources from which to derive revenue other than those which we now have; but at present I am unable to designate or recommend any other way than by increasing the ratio of direct taxation.

In the light of present experience there can be no doubt that we must restore the one-fourth mill, which was taken off for 1896 from the rate, and assess two and one-half mills for the years 1897 and 1898. This will be returning to the rate of 1894 and 1895, and as undoubtedly every dollar of the people's money which shall be thus raised will be appropriated to their necessities and respond to a well defined and pressing public need; as it is clear that a most wise and rigid economy imperatively calls for it; I am confident that the tax payers will not seriously complain of this increase.

But should we raise the rate beyond two and one-half mills I fear it might subject us to adverse criticism, and perhaps to the charge of extravagance.

People are very sensitive to a marked increase of taxation unless there is some unusual public exigency demanding it.

It is obvious then to my mind that there must and should be a reduction in the amounts appropriated by you, as compared with two years ago, of near \$125,000.00 per annum.

It is for you to inquire and determine, how and where, this reduction or saving can be made, without crippling or doing serious injury to any State institution or worthy object of State aid.

First, you must scrutinize every measure which will open new avenues to the treasury or create additional expenses, and allow none to pass unless their usefulness and immediate necessity is plain and urgent.

Second, you must, in the exercise of a sound discretion and wise economy, grant no more than is absolutely necessary in all cases where the State is bound to provide in whole or in part.

There were many sums, most of them not very large, but amounting to considerable in the aggregate, all indeed for very worthy and deserving objects, appropriated by the Legislature of 1895, which perhaps you may deem advisable, under our changed conditions and existing circumstances, not to continue, and there were other larger sums which you may decide to cut down to somewhat nearer the amount which has formerly been expended for like purposes.

My experience in legislation leads me to believe that all or nearly all of the institutions and objects, that have heretofore received aid, will return to each succeeding legislature generally asking for increased appropriations.

To comply with all these requests, however plausible may be the reasons assigned for so doing by their advocates, would soon bankrupt the treasury.

You in your judgment will doubtless be able to decide correctly when and where to cut down and curtail or refuse altogether.

I have felt it my duty to call your attention to the actual financial condition, and to suggest generally what rules should guide you in dealing with this subject, rather than to specify or enumerate any particular institution or object where retrenchment should be made.

What I have said, however, I do not intend shall apply to any sums necessary to educate the common people, to support our school system, which we do and should foster with no grudging hand, or to provide or care for the unfortunate, insane, or dependent pensioners of the war of 1861.

It is the imperative duty of this State to see to it that no old soldier, or person immediately dependent upon him, suffers from want in his declining years. To do this is not to bestow alms; but rather to recognize and discharge a sacred obligation which we owe to those whose valor saved the Republic, and which, from our wealth and resources, we can willingly and cheerfully pay.

You will therefore make such an appropriation for the State Pension Bureau as its necessities shall call for.

SCHOOLS.

The educational interests of our State are of paramount importance, and should be properly and liberally provided for. The perpetuity and stability of our republican form of government are inseparably connected with, and dependent upon, the general intelligence and enlightened patriotism of our citizens.

Every consideration of duty and safety imperatively demand that all shall have a reasonable opportunity, free of charge, to acquire at least a common school education.

Though the facilities for obtaining in our common schools an elementary and practical education are indeed very good,

and doubtless improving each year, they do not fully satisfy or respond to the wants of a large number of students who have the time, the desire, and the ability to pursue a more thorough and extended course of study.

In response to this demand, the State has wisely created a Free High school system, and also established three Normal schools, one in Farmington, one in Gorham and one in Castine. I am confident that very excellent results have been obtained from these High and Normal schools.

We have also changed from what was known as the district to the town system. In many larger towns and cities the change was voluntary. In others the act of the Legislature in 1893 compelled the change. There have been frequent changes in the method of teaching, text books, and manner of supervising our common schools, some of which, it seems to me, have been largely experimental, but on the whole they may have produced some beneficial results, yet the State Superintendent, and many other gentlemen, who are deeply interested in education, and who have carefully examined into the present condition and workings of our common school system, believe that some radical changes are now necessary in order to be, in our school management and instruction, equal to the demands of the time and the best standards of other states. Certainly the educational system of Maine should be of the very best. The State is expending each year over \$600,000.00 for the purposes of education, and the several towns and cities over \$1,200,000.00 more.

This large sum of money should be used upon business principles and with a view of obtaining the greatest possible good. The purpose and object, however praiseworthy it may be, will not excuse the improper use or needless waste of one dollar, and evidently it is worse than wasted when schools are under the control of incompetent and unsuitable supervisors and teachers, for in such cases it undoubtedly dissipates not only the money, but the time and opportunities of the pupils are lost never to be recalled.

In most instances I am confident that the teachers and supervisors take a commendable interest in looking after the schools. In some cases, especially in our small towns, I am led to believe it may not be so. It is not possible, in the remote and sparsely settled towns and plantations, to have schools of the same high grade, or to keep up to the standards of cities and larger and

more wealthy towns. It is claimed, by the friends of education, that the employment of incompetent teachers through favoritism or for some other reason can only be obviated by having all teachers pass an examination before some State board.

For further and more extensive information in reference to the management, condition, and wants of our schools I would refer you to the reports of the present State Superintendent, in which the whole subject is exhaustively treated.

The evils that beset our present system and the advisability of attempting to correct them, or to make any important changes at the present time, will undoubtedly be hereafter presented to your Committee on Education by gentlemen much more familiar with the subject than myself.

THE INSANE.

Every humane consideration demands that the insane shall receive the greatest possible care, and the best known treatment. These unfortunate people are peculiarly the wards of the State.

I am confident that in the Insane Hospital at Augusta everything is done that the crowded condition permits, that all patients cared for there, have humane and kind attendants, that the medical staff is competent, and we may well congratulate ourselves that under the wise and careful supervision of its excellent Board of Trustees, there has been no whisper of any practices, such as have been discovered in some kindred institutions in other states.

The number of patients has so largely increased of late, and the necessity of another hospital in the near future was so apparent, that several years ago a tract of land was purchased in the city of Bangor for that purpose. Before doing this additions had been made to the hospital in Augusta, from time to time, until it was deemed unwise to continue this policy further, or have any more patients aggregated in one place.

The over-crowded condition of the hospital at Augusta compelled the Legislature of 1895 to take further action and appropriate \$150,000 towards erecting the Eastern Maine Hospital on the lot which had been purchased for that purpose. This hospital is intended, in its construction and equipment, to embody all the best modern thought and improvements. A committee authorized by the Legislature was appointed by Gov. Cleaves to superintend the work. Gentlemen of business experience

and integrity, they have, I think, faithfully and wisely expended the sum appropriated. It was not supposed that the sum of \$150,000.00 would complete this undertaking.

It was well understood that the grant would have to be supplemented with other appropriations. The report of this committee will give you in detail full particulars of what has been done, and what they will require to properly continue the work during the years 1897 and 1898. This work must go forward. An appropriation should be made. It is for you to decide what sum you will give them to expend this year and also what sum for the next.

INSURANCE.

The reports of the Insurance Commissioner and his recommendations deserve special attention. This question of insurance is one in which very many are deeply interested. Any legislation which can reduce the annual loss must undoubtedly bring lower rates of insurance in time. We are dependent almost wholly on foreign companies for insurance, and the present rates, especially on farm buildings, are so high as to almost prohibit placing policies upon them, in most cases.

There has been considerable legislation on the subject of insurance and yet I doubt if very much has resulted therefrom to insurers or insured.

It would seem that the only way we can hope to obtain the much desired lower rates is to reduce the average loss so as to satisfy the companies that they can give it to us and yet make a reasonable profit.

All then have a personal interest not only in preventing fires, but in ferreting out and punishing any persons who shall willfully burn property to obtain the amounts insured thereon.

STATE PRISON AND REFORM SCHOOL.

Your joint committees will visit the State Prison and the Reform School, and thoroughly examine everything connected with the workings of these institutions. The reports of the officers who have charge of them will give you a full insight into their condition, the number of persons therein, and the terms for which they have been committed. The general methods of conducting and governing both should be carefully inquired

into. Not that I doubt the excellence and correctness of the management in all the departments but I do believe in prisons, reform schools, and insane hospitals, nothing should be taken for granted.

In this connection I would call your attention to the fact that under existing laws, as I understand them, R. S. Chapter 142, a boy of only eight years of age may be, for no very grave offence, sent to the Reform School until he is twenty-one. I believe that no boy eight, ten or twelve years of age should be ever irrevocably sentenced to that institution for so long a term; and I submit that it might be wise to try, at least in case of youthful offenders, the indefinite period.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ETC.

The Industrial School for Girls will doubtless receive your favorable consideration, and such assistance as shall enable it to effectually carry on the excellent work it is now doing. Nothing can be more meritorious than to help young persons in starting rightly in the race of life.

The State of Maine should continue to liberally provide for and educate the unfortunate deaf, dumb, and blind, and also willingly aid in caring for the children in the military and naval hospital.

There are other institutions, hospitals, and infirmaries which are doing philanthropic and humanitarian work, alleviating suffering, and caring for those who cannot properly care for themselves, that are deserving of judicious and discriminating assistance. I doubt very much if it is best to encourage an increase in their number. It would seem that less expensive and better results might be obtained from smaller numbers, centrally located, easy of access, where the best professional skill could always be relied upon.

MAINE STATE COLLEGE.

The Maine State College has been established little more than thirty years. Those who rocked the cradle of its struggling infancy amid doubts, hopes, and fears, must feel gratified at its remarkable and unprecedented growth.

Its trustees and faculty have been unsparing in their efforts and have succeeded beyond their fondest hope.

In 1893 there were 169 students pursuing the several courses of instruction. At present there are 316, with a certain prospect of still further increase in numbers, notwithstanding the requirements for admission have been raised to some extent. This institution of learning was founded for the express purpose of promoting knowledge of agriculture and the mechanic arts, and to enable the industrial classes, so called, to procure a practical education by reducing the expense so that it would be within their reach. It is in fact, a school "of science and technology," where students who desire sound and useful instruction that shall fit them to enter successfully upon the practical duties of life, rather than to sit under the shadow of a great name like that of Harvard or Yale, can obtain it at a very reasonable cost. It is emphatically a college of and for the common people. It deserves and will receive just treatment from your hands.

The State of Maine when it accepted the land grant from the general government entered into certain obligations which we should faithfully discharge.

This college has a permanent endowment fund of \$231,000. The annual interest of which sum I suppose amounts to some \$10,000. It also receives annually from the U. S. about \$22,000.00 for the purpose of instruction and \$15,000 for investigation in agriculture and the sciences.

Its necessities in excess of these sums must be provided for by the State. What further assistance shall be granted it, and for how long a period that grant shall extend, are questions to be settled by you, so as to promote as far as possible the best interests of the college, and, at the same time, not place too heavy a burden on the tax payers.

Its pressing wants and needs and the financial condition of the treasury for the next two years are factors to be considered in determining what you can and will do for this institution.

NATIONAL GUARD.

There are at present in the State two infantry regiments of National Guard composed of twenty-four companies with the usual staff and line officers; also an ambulance and signal corps containing in all some 1,400 officers, non commissioned officers, and privates. These troops go into camp once each year in Augusta.

The number in camp in 1895 was 1,172. I am informed that the number in 1896 was about the same. In 1891 the number in camp was 771. You will see there has been a marked increase in numbers. I also think there has been equal advancement in discipline and soldierly qualities. The guard has not only increased in numbers but in efficiency, and it is a credit to the State.

All who have visited these annual encampments bear witness that the personnel and soldierly bearing of both regiments are, considering their opportunities, of a very high order. They are composed of intelligent, patriotic young men, largely dependent upon their own efforts for success in life, nearly every one of whom is engaged in some useful vocation. All of them are unswervingly loyal to our State and Nation, and have a deep personal interest in preserving the public peace and maintaining our present enviable position as a State. To attain their present excellent condition in drill and marksmanship they have been obliged to devote, without any expectation of remuneration, much time which they could hardly afford to give.

I think you will concur with me that it is wise and prudent to retain the present numbers and efficiency of the State Guard, and that such sums should be appropriated as are necessary and required for that purpose.

The millenium when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares seems as yet some way off.

I see no special reason that should lead to any increase in our present military establishment, yet as Maine is a border State, it seems to me a prudent foresight would determine that we should have a small but effective military organization to form a nucleus to rally around in case any emergency should arise, and certainly the present commendable activity of the national government in building a navy and strengthening our coast defences—the possible complications that may at any time arise from the struggle now going on in Cuba for freedom and independence, are indications, and perhaps the coming shadows of future events, which we should not wholly disregard.

The reports of the Adjutant General, and other information which he will furnish you from his office, will advise you more fully as to what the necessities of the service demand; and I have no doubt you will cheerfully grant them.

AGRICULTURE, LUMBER AND MANUFACTURES.

Maine is vitally interested in agriculture, lumber and manufactures. Agriculture is the basis of the world's prosperity and wealth. Without it other vocations would cease. It is emphatically the leading and most important industry in our State to-day. A very large part of our people are directly or indirectly interested in it. But I am confident that our agricultural possibilities for improving, by better and more judicious farming, are not as yet fully understood and appreciated even by our own citizens.

Our soil yields larger returns per acre than most of the land in the great farming states of the West. In some sections of Maine cultivation is more difficult and expensive, but this is largely compensated by our nearness to good markets and there are but few sections of other states where the great majority of the farmers possess as good and substantial buildings, are as free from debt, are so prosperous and enjoy so many of the comforts of life as in our own. Yet much more can be accomplished by better and more intelligent methods of cultivation and diversification and proper selection of crops.

Our farmers' institutes are doing excellent work in this direction. They are furnishing much valuable information, and awakening an interest which must produce beneficial results that will more than compensate for all their cost.

Impurity in seeds, especially grass seeds, brought into the State, have done at times great damage by producing crops of noxious weeds instead of grass or grain.

I am inclined to think that something should be done to prevent the sale in our markets of any but reasonably clean seeds. It is not so easy for the average farmer to discover the impurities until it is too late.

It might be well to provide, by appropriate legislation, that there should be some proper inspection and branding of the various grass seeds, mill feeds, etc., imported here, and that they should be marked distinctly what they really are so that no one can be deceived as to what he is purchasing.

In recommending that our farmers and dairy men be protected from fraud along these lines, I think I give expression to the very general wish and desire of a class of men that are certainly entitled to consideration.

Farmers are especially interested in good roads and reasonable freight rates. Our highways in some localities certainly are not what they should be. There are some towns that are not able to make them as desired without aid from the county or State. In some others the money is often injudiciously and improperly expended.

Under existing laws the burden of maintaining roads and building bridges often bears very unequally upon towns and townships, and is anything but proportionate to the benefits conferred.

Correct these inequalities and provide that all road money shall be raised and wisely expended as a prudent man would conduct his own business affairs and you have taken the first, and a very important step towards getting better roads, and responding to a demand which is quite general at present throughout our State.

A careful study of our laws for building and repairing roads, will, I think, convince anyone that they need revision and some radical changes.

It is, however, for you, gentlemen, to determine, after patient investigation, what, if anything, shall be done.

Our railroad service is excellent so far as safety, comfort, and convenience of the travelling public is concerned. Few states, if any, located and settled as ours, can boast better accommodations than we have, and we should indeed be grateful to the men who have the management of our railroads, for their fidelity and constant care and devotion to the public good. Yet I am inclined to the opinion that some of the freight rates are high, compared with what is paid by our competitors in New York and the West, where they have several trunk lines. The greater cost of building and operating here doubtless accounts for a part of this.

This difference in freight often drives our farmers out of our immediate markets by flooding them with the products brought from distant states at much lower cost than we have been able to obtain—a condition alike injurious to the railroads and our citizens, and which I have no doubt the railroads will effectually remedy in the immediate future. They fully realize that it would be a wise, and, in the end the best paying policy, to obviate this as far as possible so that our manufactures by their increased output, and our farmers, by raising larger crops, can

compensate for the lower traffic rates with the additional business which would result, and at the same time have the means to travel and more largely patronize the roads.

Certainly the prosperity of the industries and the people of our State, and our railroads are very largely and inseparably connected.

Our lumbering and manufacturing interests are not in as prosperous condition as could be desired. The unprecedentedly low prices since we have been compelled to meet a large foreign competition in our own markets have pressed heavily upon them.

I am not aware that any new cotton or woolen mills have been erected during the past three years, while many of those already built have been compelled to suspend operation or run at a loss.

Under changed tariff conditions we hope, in the not far distant future, to once more see their former prosperous business return. There have been built, however, within a few years several large pulp and paper mills, and more are in contemplation. These mills have created a new and quite a large demand for spruce and other woods suitable for pulp, and opened a new market for certain kinds of lumber and wood with which our forests abound. This industry, I am confident, is destined to give to Maine very largely the control of the paper production of this country.

Our forests furnish employment for laborers and a home market for a large amount of the products of our farms. They are a source of Maine's wealth, second only to agriculture. Fire is their greatest scourge. All are interested in their preservation.

Any request or recommendation of the Land Agent or Forestry Commissioners, which shall more effectually protect them from destruction by fire, set through carelessness or by design, is of vital importance to all the people of the State as well as to the land owners themselves.

LABOR.

The report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics contains much valuable information. Everything that pertains to the interests and welfare of what is termed the labor class is of special importance to us all.

When the wage earners and industrial classes of any country are constantly and remuneratively employed, that Nation is

prosperous and its people contented and happy. I have always believed in and advocated the rights and dignity of labor. I have ever favored all labor organizations designed to promote—by legitimate means,—the welfare of its members. To aid men in securing proper compensation for their services, and a more just division of the product or capital created by them, is praiseworthy and deserves encouragement.

As a rule in the State of Maine there have been no very serious conflicts between employer and employed. We are not cursed with extremes of poverty and wealth; with classes having an almost impassable gulf between them, that look upon each other with mutterings and bitter distrust. All our citizens are, substantially, on the same plane in life. Capital and labor have generally complemented and assisted each other, and we may reasonably hope that this state of things is to continue in the future. Yet there are some labor problems to be solved even in our State.

Many wage earners are engaged in very hazardous vocations on railroads, steamships, and in some factories and mills. Often they cannot and do not know what dangers and perils surround them.

Every humane consideration demands that the best possible safeguards should be thrown about them; and that employers should exercise the highest degree of care in the selection of everything to be used in and about their work.

Questions of this kind involving the liability of employers, and also questions relating to the number of hours of labor under certain conditions and ages, are still being agitated.

You should not grant legislation in any case because it is demanded by the wage earners on the one side, or refuse it because it is opposed by the employers on the other, but rather in the exercise of a sound discretion, and your unbiased judgment, do what you believe to be just and for the best interests of all concerned.

PROHIBITION.

A large majority of the people of our State are thoroughly and conscientiously devoted to the principles and practice of temperance, integrity, morality and virtue as a fundamental policy essential to our best development and growth. They believe that the restraining influence of our prohibitory legislation has had a marked effect in eradicating the evils resulting from the liquor traffic.

Doubtless there has not been a full realization of what the most ardent and enthusiastic advocates of prohibition prophesied and hoped, but certainly great good has been accomplished.

In most of our rural country towns the groggery is a thing of the past; and we are moving in the right direction throughout the State.

It is my conviction that what we need to-day is a more active public sentiment in our larger towns and cities, which will enforce the laws we now have, rather than additional penalties that will make the enforcement more uncertain and difficult.

We should never forget that it is the certainty and not the severity of punishment that prevents crime. All efforts to increase this healthy public sentiment until it shall utterly root out and banish this blighting curse from our land should receive the cheerful support of all good citizens. We should take no steps backward. Maine, which boasts the proud honor of having been the pioneer in prohibitory legislation, should and will continue to be a prohibition State.

SHIPPING.

Not many years ago the building and sailing of ships was one of the most important industries of our State. We still have the timber and the ship yards, but they are largely silent. Then we could boast a splendid merchant marine,—the finest in the world,—owned by American citizens, sailing under the stars and stripes, officered and manned very largely by American seamen and sailors, the sails of which whitened every sea and contested successfully for the carrying trade of the world.

To-day the United States are paying more than \$100,000,000.00 per annum to foreign vessels and steamships for carrying their merchandise.

I have not time to present the various causes, which, in my judgment, have produced this lamentable condition. But it does seem to me that patriotism, and the best interests of our country, urgently demand that, by proper discrimination and encouragement, this important enterprise should be revived, and work once more resumed in our shipyards along the coast.

A merchant marine would furnish a nursery from which to draw American seamen with which to man our constantly increasing navy.

The Republican National platform and most of the Republican platforms in the various states are pledged to action in this behalf. It is important that something be done and that quickly. The Legislature of 1895 relieved this class of property of very much of the burdens of taxation that it was at that time subject to.

I think we have good reasons to expect that, through our able delegation in Congress, which will gladly do all in its power, effective measures will soon be taken to secure this much needed encouragement and legislation.

FISHERIES AND GAME.

During the past two years the Commissioners of Inland Fisheries and Game have used every reasonable effort, and adopted the best known methods of fish culture, to more fully stock our lakes, streams, and rivers with fish suitable for food. They have good reason to hope and believe that success will ultimately crown these endeavors.

Already there has been a marked increase in many rivers and lakes of the several varieties which they are propagating. This work, so plainly beneficial to our State, is deserving reasonable pecuniary aid and support which you will doubtless be pleased to grant.

Under the most prudent and economical management it must necessarily cost considerable sums of money to overcome the many obstacles and replenish our inland waters with fish which shall be attractive to the sportsmen, and also produce excellent food for all.

These commissioners have also for the past two years taken extraordinary care to protect and preserve, especially during close time, the game with which our forests abound, and they have, to a great extent, prevented the indiscriminate and illegal killing of moose, deer, and caribou, which was so common not a very long time ago.

The slaughter by men lumbering in the woods has nearly ceased, and at present most of the guides, woodsmen and settlers upon the outskirts of the forests recognize the wisdom of our game laws and quite generally obey them.

But there are some persons that nothing but the rigid enforcement of these laws will restrain. Hence the evident necessity of having a reasonable number of energetic and efficient game

wardens, whom I think should also act as fire wardens, as it is necessary to protect the forests from fire if we would have game at all.

The commissioners' report will be presented to you and explain what has been done, and what they desire to do, and what further legislation, in their opinion, is needed to prevent the destruction and extermination of moose and caribou, and to enable them to properly care for the game in our woods, and replenish our waters with fish.

Many of our best citizens have a deep and abiding interest in this subject. They claim that hunting and fishing in our forest and streams affords a healthy and invigorating pastime free to all our own people; that it also brings many desirable visitors and sportsmen to our State; and is a source of no small revenue and profit. I have great confidence in the correctness of their conclusions.

The sea shore fisheries of our State furnish employment to many thousands of people and should be carefully guarded and protected against any improper methods of fishing so as not to impair their productiveness.

Not only should there be adequate laws and regulations to accomplish this end, but they should be impartially and thoroughly enforced, and the necessary means must be appropriated for so doing.

ELECTION LAWS.

The Republican party demands a free and fair ballot and an honest count. There are no more dangerous and reprehensible crimes than those committed against the purity and honesty of elections. This may be accomplished by fraud, intimidation, or virtual disfranchisement of men who have a constitutional right to vote and have their ballots counted.

Substantially the same results may follow if a large number of voters fail, under existing laws and regulations, to cast votes so marked that they can and will be as the law requires. Our system of voting should be such that the average citizen will be able to select and designate his ballot so that it will count for the candidate of his choice.

From some cause there is an alarmingly large number of defective ballots under our present election laws.

From the best attainable information I am convinced that nearly five thousand persons failed to vote correctly at the last September election, and were consequently disfranchised.

This question came before the Legislature of 1895, through a bill drawn by Hon. James W. Bradbury of Augusta. But it was deemed best to give the existing voting laws a further trial and the bill and accompanying papers were therefore referred to this Legislature.

The whole subject will be before you. I have no definite recommendation to make other than earnestly request that you carefully inquire if there cannot be some changes made, that shall afford the people an opportunity to vote with less difficulties, more certainty of having their ballots counted, and at the same time provide the desired secrecy and also safety from intimidation.

In what I have said I do not wish to be understood as in the least opposing the principles upon which the so-called Australian system is based, as they have my sincere approval, but rather to endeavor to find some more satisfactory method of arranging the details.

BANKS, ETC.

Our savings banks, trust companies, and loan and building associations are subject to inspection and examination by the State bank examiner. His reports, which you have before you, demonstrate that they are generally in a sound and healthy condition. There are thirty-four State loan and building associations. Confidence in them was perhaps somewhat shaken by the failure of the Granite State Provident Association of New Hampshire, which had many members in all sections of the State. Yet they are doing, I think, a legitimate business, improving in their management, have had a fairly successful year, and are deserving encouragement and patronage.

There has been one additional trust company, but no new savings banks organized, and there has been no failure or suspension of any of our savings banks during the past two years. This speaks well for their faithful and conservative business management. Yet you should not hesitate to place additional restrictions and safe guards around them, for the further protection of depositors and investors in any of these institutions, if you think their patrons' interest and safety demand it.

I am not prepared to endorse the recommendation of the bank examiner for a reduction of the State tax on savings banks. I am not yet confident of its wisdom or necessity, especially upon investments made outside the State.

I do, however, recognize the fact that a large share of the deposits and assets of these institutions are trust funds, and the hard earned savings of small wage earners, and that any request of these banks should receive from you proper consideration, and they should certainly be relieved, as asked, if the present rates are inequitable or excessive.

CORPORATIONS.

Charters conferring special and exclusive privileges, or giving away valuable public franchises, especially where the act of incorporation carries with it the right of eminent domain, and permits the incorporators to take private property for their so called public use, you should scrutinize with great care. They should not be granted solely for individual profit or gain. You should be satisfied, in every instance, that the public good is the principal interest to be served, and that individual or private rights will be amply compensated for any injuries received. I fear that our State has sometimes given away very valuable franchises too readily.

You will have before you, doubtless, many applications for charters which could and should be organized under the general law.

There has been an effort for many years to call a halt. To this end the Constitution was amended so as to require the organization of most corporations under general laws, and ample statutes were provided for so doing. Yet an examination of the acts of the several sessions of the Legislature since that time will show that the volume of private or special legislation is constantly increasing. You should ever keep in view the Constitutional inhibition against creating corporations by legislative enactment when they can be organized under the general provision for so doing.

Laws which tend to create monopolies or prevent a healthy competition are not wise.

In this connection I would invite your attention to Section 1, Chapter 102 of the Public Laws of 1895. This section seems to me to prevent any necessary improvement being made where some prior persons or corporation has merely organized unless you buy it or them off, or get legislative action. I was a member of the Legislature that enacted it.

For some reason it escaped my observation, as I presume it did most of those who were responsible for its passage. As I view it, it contains a novel and sweeping prohibition of almost every public enterprise, until a session of the Legislature shall grant relief,—no matter how much the public convenience may be injured,—in case some rival has located in the same town or city or in some instances in an adjoining one and refuses consent.

I think that you in your judgment will decide that it should be repealed.

The question of the right of the citizen to other or better services,—or to any services at all,—should not be determined by some interested person or corporation that has first attempted to occupy the ground. It should be decided by some impartial tribunal, where the demands of the people shall be heard and respected. The public should not be compelled to wait, perhaps for the space of two years, before they can have an opportunity for a hearing in many cases, no matter how urgent.

I would not, however, advocate interfering with or impairing vested rights where the general public are receiving such services as they have a right to expect.

No corporation should be organized or charter granted merely as a menace to some enterprise already established.

I think that the Legislature acted wisely in providing that, in all cases where it is sought to parallel existing lines of railroad by organizing an electric railroad system under the general law, that it should not be done, unless the railroad commissioners determine that public convenience and necessity require it.

We should encourage investments in our State, by assurance of protection in the use and enjoyment of all franchises against unnecessary competition, so long as the public are well and faithfully served. But the right of the people to good services at a reasonable price should be more sacred than the claims of any monopoly or corporation.

There is also, I apprehend, a tendency toward too much public legislation. Not every proposed change in our statutes is necessarily an improvement; and the burden should be upon those who ask for them to show their necessity and wisdom.

It is better to be conservative rather than to try doubtful experiments. A people is not always governed best that is legislated for most. In very many instances it is not of so

much importance what the law is, as that it be and remain settled so that the people can govern themselves accordingly with a fixed knowledge of its requirements and of their rights and duties.

STATE AUDITOR.

I have received several communications from men who have had large experience in our State's affairs, setting forth the necessity of creating the office of State auditor, and also declaring that the State would make a large saving by so doing. I believe that most states have established the office and have a state auditor, whose special duty is to audit all accounts and claims, and draw his warrants upon the state treasury for the amounts found due.

Section 4 of Article 5 of the Constitution provides that the Governor and Council shall draw all warrants of this kind. It would seem to me that if it is desirable to create this office, and establish another bureau, that it might be necessary to submit to the people an amendment to the Constitution in which case we should be able to get an expression of their views upon the subject.

I know full well, that when an office or department is once fastened upon the State, it is almost impossible to get rid of it; though it may have outlived its usefulness and every purpose for which it was originally created. The incumbents, present or prospective, never fail to devise some plausible pretext for its continuance, yet this should not deter us from doing what is absolutely essential to better protect the treasury of the State. But I must express here and now my sincere belief that both good policy, good politics, and strict economy, unmistakably declare that in this time of general depression,—this Legislature so largely Republican, should not,—except for urgent reasons—create a new State office or commission, or increase the salary of any now in existence.

The Constitution of our State declares that the Governor "shall from time to time give the Legislature information of the condition of the State, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he may judge expedient." In this my endeavor to perform that duty I have briefly called your attention to a few of the many subjects upon which it will be your province to deliberate and act. There are many other impor-

tant, varied, and sometimes conflicting interests of the people which will necessarily demand your impartial consideration.

I may, in the course of this session, should I deem it advisable, communicate to you further suggestions.

A spirit of fairness and impartiality and an earnest purpose to accomplish the greatest attainable good for all, rather than to especially benefit any one section, locality, or class of persons, should guide and control your deliberations, dominate and determine your votes.

Gentlemen, in conclusion let me indulge in the hope and belief, that your assembling here will be pleasant to yourselves, profitable to the State, and that the associations and friendships here formed will be lasting, and among the bright memories of our lives never to be forgotten or regretted.

LLEWELLYN POWERS.